

L'APIA. 1824

of San Martino, (to the valley of the Germanasca).  
This valley is scarcely wider than the bed  
of the torrent which runs through it, it is  
entirely surrounded with by lofty  
mountains rugged rocks, the only  
entrance into it is by a single narrow  
pass. Here also, the traveller comes upon  
a pretty grove of chestnut trees. The chestnut  
makes into a kind of post, forms an  
important part of the food of the people.  
Here the Waldenses, 367 in number,  
entrenched themselves; & they held  
this natural fortress for six months  
against an army of 22,000 French &  
Savoyards Piedmontese. Henry Arnaud  
happily was left the story of this  
wonderful defence. See cap. describing  
the rocky ravine they held. - The Balaia, a. as  
it was called, the Castle, is a lofty & very  
steep rock, rising by three different  
terraces on each of which entrenchments  
were made, with supplies with a large  
store of stones to hurl at the assailants.  
The access to it is everywhere difficult,  
the side on which it is least so is from a  
torrent which runs from its feet. Trees  
were cut down & disposed across this  
opening that the branches should oppose  
to the assailants. A large of trees was loaded  
with large stones, on which were again placed  
trees secured in the same manner, & so on.  
The enemy parried the first barricade of  
trees, but their utmost efforts were unable  
to remove them, the Waldenses opened  
a tremendous fire, the greater part were  
stricken on the ground, while the besieged did

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did not lose a single man. In about ten days the French returned to the attack, & surrounded the Balaie with batteries, the fire from which soon destroyed the rude entrenchments of the Waldenses. These <sup>now</sup> thought of nothing but how to make their escape, but the heavy fires kept up by the French made it impossible to do this under cover of the night. At the very moment when a most cruel death seemed to be preparing for them, a boy arose to screen them, & a friendly guide offered his help, who declared the only chance of escape to be across a frightful precipitous ravine. They followed him down this chasm, some sliding on their back, others scrambling with one knee on the ground, holding by the branches of the trees, now others resting, others feeling their way with hands & feet. Boulet (their guide) made them take off their shoes, that they might the better perceive whether they placed their feet on anything capable of supporting them. In this manner they passed close to one of the French outposts, & one of his number let fall a small kettle, which rolling over the stones, made noise enough to distract a French sentinel, who cried out "Vive!" However, they made good their escape into the Val Pelice with no loss of only six killed. There, to their surprise & joy they were met with the news that the French & the Piedmontese had quarrelled, so they joined the army of the latter to fight against the common foe. This was the last persecution against the Vaudois Vaudois; but it was not until the reign of the present King of Italy that they were allowed the same privilege as Roman Catholics.

We must now make our way northwards to

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to melt coveredways as a protection against the avalanches to which this part of the mtn. is exposed. The view from <sup>that is</sup> the summit is very magnificent; the eye ranges over the snowy peaks of the Bernese Alps, the snow-covered <sup>the</sup> Jura mts with their glaciers, the great glaciers of Aletsch, & the upper valley of the Rhine. ~~A little above the~~ The summit is exposed to dreadful storms & there is here ~~at~~ Hospice, where travellers are sheltered by storms as received by some brothers of the Great Saint Bernard. After a short descent, the traveller enters the valley of Simplon, nearly 5,000 feet above the sea. After leaving Simplon, the road advances toward the deep gorge of the Dora Drs. the most beautiful & awful part of the Simplon. Here the rocky & perpendicular bases of the mountains approach closely, leaving only space for the road & the foaming torrent; here & there the Dora Drs. fills the whole of the narrow space, & in such places the road is carried through galleries cut in the rocks. Where the ravine narrows the mountains which stand - it appears to increase in height. The road is sometimes scooped into the side of the rocks, sometimes hangs over the abyss; & where either a terrace or a gallery can be made on one side a bridge crosses the torrent, & thence to the road is carried forward on the other side. Torrents are poured out from the overhanging rocks in some places about 1000 feet above the traveller. But - the wonder of this part of the road is the great

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them rich & independent. In 1797, in the  
first time in its history, a small foreign  
force made good <sup>and took</sup> landing on the  
shores of Venice <sup>in the month of</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>the</sup> <sup>few years after</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>French</sup> <sup>invaded</sup>  
ancient & glorious republic was given  
over to the dominion of Austria.

The most splendid part of Venice is the  
Grande Piazza di San Marco, <sup>at the Piazza which leads to the</sup> <sup>St. Mark's</sup> <sup>Church</sup>  
of the east end the old palace of the Doges; on the other  
side is the beautiful Mint & the Library  
of St. Mark, both modern looking buildings  
from the sea shore which forms the  
fourth side, stand two magnificent  
granite columns, each of a single block,  
one crowned with the winged lion of St.  
Mark in bronze, the other bearing the  
statue of St. Theodore. Between these  
columns in former times public  
executions took place. Divided from  
the犬 palace by a narrow channel  
is the city prison; a covered bridge  
raised so high above the water links the  
palace with the dungeon; this is the famous  
Bridge of Sighs ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>such</sup> ~~dangerous~~ <sup>dangerous</sup> ~~Wander~~  
was wont to be led to look out on scenes  
of death, often for no greater fault than  
that they bore a good name in the city  
which excited the jealousy of the Doge.  
The first sight of the Grand Square itself  
is extremely striking, as in meeting  
the traveller recognises the change. The  
church, the great ~~city~~ <sup>city</sup> belfry which views of  
Venice have made familiar to him. In  
front of the church are three tall red poles  
from which in former day, the flags of  
Candia, Cyprus & the Morea, the three vassal  
kingdoms of the haughty republic, floated on

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war; they allied themselves to greater powers & fought for the Pope on the one hand, or for the German Emperor on the other. The adherents of the Pope were called Guelphs, & those of the Emperor Ghibelins. Every city & almost every citizen flourished in one of these barbarous denominations; but whether a city declared itself Guelph or Ghibelin depended a good deal on the last letter by whom other city with which it was at peace. Thus Pisa & Florence, Padua & Bologna, Cremona & Milan espoused opposite parties. It is difficult for an English reader to conceive of the state of things which obtained, more or less, in Italy from the eleventh to the end of the fifteenth century. Our country affords more than one sad instance of civil war, when Englishmen have fought against Englishmen; but, for the great cities to be pitted against one another, Birmingham against Manchester, Liverpool against Leeds, - this is a kind of warfare we happily know nothing about. ~~Some towns~~ <sup>truly</sup> do well defend our cities ~~they~~ as few & open to all comers because all who come are friends; but imagine for a moment all our great northern towns to be separate states, republics, whose "volunteer" <sup>men</sup> were indeed employed as little armies, to fight Newcastle against Carlisle, Sunderland against South Shields, & you will form some idea of the condition of the Italian republics. To travel in Italy, is to understand

of volcanic rock which intercepts the drainage. It is supposed that gaseous emanations from the soil caused by the decaying vegetable matter which is prevented by the volcanic rock from escaping into the subsoil with the drainage. At least this is one of several theories offered to account for the malaria & its attendant 'Roman fevers' which desolates so great a part of what should be the fairest & most fertile of European countries.

A curious experiment has been tried lately at the monastery of Le Fontaine (Nursi mountains) at some little distance from Rome. The *Eucalyptus* tree, known by its rather leathery, pendulous, quivering foliage, is being a good deal cultivated in southern Europe on account of its value as a drainer of the soil & purifier of the atmosphere - a result partly brought about by the enormous evaporation which takes place from its leaves. The lands <sup>are</sup> now all raised of Le Fontaine of a sterile wilderness; here are meadows, vineyards & corn-fields, compactly cultivated, & coming close up to the building, almost a forest of *Eucalypt* trees. Before 1866 the Abbey was deserted; a single haggard-looking monk, it is true, remained to show the place to visitors, but he was obliged to return to Rome every night to sleep. Now the abbey is inhabited by twenty-nine healthy brethren who sleep & live there entirely. The change may be partly due to drainage, but chiefly to the *Eucalypt* which the monk,

in Florence he ~~had~~ painted many of his most famous pictures. Nowhere perhaps is there a more precious collection of treasure of art than in the Florentine Museum; & besides these, there are valuable picture galleries in several of the great palaces. There are always many foreigners staying in this delightful city, especially in the spring which is the pleasantest season. A traveller says, "An evening walk in an Italian ville at this season of night is almost a most delicious treat. Night is the most delightful period of the whole twenty-four hours, & the fire-fly adds much to the charm of the scene. The whole garden is illuminated by myriads of these sparkling lights, sprinkled almost with as much ~~profusion~~ <sup>delightful pleasure</sup> as sparkle on a lady's face".

In the middle of the day all business is suspended, & the shops are shut during the hours allotted to the siesta. It is in the evening that the streets may be seen swarming with all classes; then, the workman puts on his good coat, takes his guitar, & sallies forth to improvise, for every Florentine can invent to late or low song & song as he goes on. We cannot bring over the history of Florence, one of the most turbulent cities, yet glorious & wealthy of the Italian republics, whose nobles used to gather round them poet, painter, & philosopher, & thus ~~thus~~ the annuals of Florence are peopled with some of the most famous names in Italian story. Dante & Petrarch among the poets, Michael Angelo & Leonardo da Vinci among the painters, & Galileo, were all Florentines by birth.

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colonial produce. Valona, a small town but  
the chief port of Albania, Pogradec<sup>monaster</sup> & Shkodra  
upon the lake of the same name, are towns  
of some little importance.

### Stamboul & other Towns of Bosphorus.

\* Even if we should take part in the chant-about  
"Mosques & minarets" we can still yield precious to  
Stamboul. We can chant-about the harbours we can  
say a sing that nowhere else does the sea come so homely  
to a city; there are no pebbly shores, no sand bars,  
no slimy river beds, no black canals, no locks  
nor docks to divide the very heart of the place  
from the deepwaters. Iy being in the most  
part of Stamboul.